WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A software application framework comprising:

    a virtual object space providing access to a plurality of objects, each object having a set of functionality and being identifiable by a unique identifier provided by the virtual object space; and

    a visualization framework for visualizing objects independently of an application implementing the object, each object being visualized using the object's unique identifier and according to the object's corresponding set of functionality.

2. The framework of claim 1, wherein the virtual object space further provides generic object functionality for the plurality of objects.

3. The framework of claim 2, wherein the generic object functionality includes at least one or more of the following:

    associations and transactions functionality for relating objects and interaction between objects;

    distribution functionality for distributing the virtual object space; and

    persistency functionality for maintaining persistency of the objects.

4. The framework of claim 1, further comprising:

    framework services providing common event handling of the plurality of objects.

5. A software-implemented object browser framework comprising:

    a virtual object space providing access to a plurality of objects, each object being identifiable by a unique identifier;

    a user interface for receiving input from a user relating to a desired arrangement of one or more software objects; and

    a visualization framework for visualizing objects according to the desired arrangement, each object being visualized using the object's unique identifier independently of an application implementing the object.

6.   The object browser framework of claim 5, wherein the user interface further includes allowing a user to browse the plurality of objects independent of one or more applications implementing the objects.

7.   The object browser framework of claim 5, wherein the desired arrangement is

5   hierarchical.

8.   The object browser framework of claim 5, wherein the visualization framework includes an object viewer.

9.   A method of facilitating software object browsing, the method comprising:

providing access to software objects through a virtual object space in which each

10   software object has an associated set of functionality and is identifiable by a unique

identifier; and

visualizing objects independently of an application implementing the object, each object being visualized using the object's unique identifier and according to the object's corresponding set of functionality.

15   10.   The method of claim 9, further comprising:

providing generic object functionality for the software objects through the virtual

object space.

11.   The method of claim 10, wherein providing generic object functionality includes providing at least one or more of the following:

20   associations and transactions functionality for relating objects and interaction between objects;

distribution functionality for distributing the virtual object space; and

persistency functionality for maintaining persistency of the objects.

12.   The method of claim 9, further comprising:

25   providing framework services providing common event handling of the software

objects.